



Lives of the Trees: An Uncommon History

Diana Wells

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Diana Wells, author of *100 Flowers* and *How They Got Their Names* now turns her attention to something bigger—our deep-rooted relationship with trees. As she investigates the names and meanings of trees, telling their legends and lore, she reminds us of just how innately bound we are to these protectors of our planet. Since the human race began, we have depended on them for food, shade, shelter and fuel, not to mention furniture, musical instruments, medicine utensils and more.

Wells has a remarkable ability to dig up the curious and the captivating: At one time, a worm found in a hazelnut prognosticated ill fortune. Rowan trees were planted in churchyards to prevent the dead from rising from their graves. Greek arrows were soaked in deadly yew, and Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth* used "Gall of goat and slips of Yew" to make their lethal brew. One bristlecone pine, at about 4,700 years old, is thought to be the oldest living plant on earth. All this and more can be found in the beautifully illustrated pages (themselves born of birch bark!) of *100 Trees*.

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